

A few dime stores remain in Peoria

By JOHN R. LESKO

of the Journal Star

The Peoria area has seen its share of 5-and-10-cent stores disappear with the advent of discount-department chains.

Kresge's in Sheridan Village, then the final remaining Kresge's store in Illinois, shut down in 1987 when its parent company, K mart, said the five-and-dime "didn't really suit the corporate direction" in which the company was heading.

In 1982, the F.W. Woolworth store at 113 SW Adams closed its doors for the final time in its 84-year reign.

Still, a handful of stores persevere and continue in Peoria.

Jerry and Mary Hoerr have owned the Ben Franklin at 4538 N. Prospect in Peoria Heights for 25 years. His parents ran the store before that.

"It's tough. We're a dying breed," said Mary Hoerr.

She added that the stores still offer a few unique ideas. "The service keeps us going. You hope that people will be willing to pay 10 to 15 cents more for something if you're able to talk to them and treat them like a person."

Stores like Ben Franklin and Fogler's Variety, at Knoxville and McClure, have made changes to survive in today's market.

But Richard Fogler, who opened his first general merchandise store in 1956, said the key to survival remains constant.

McCrory's in Sarasota sides its McCrory's, Kress's

VF Peo BUSINESS - Kresge

VF Peo Bus (Kresge)

"You have to change and adapt," Fogler said. "The key is having the merchandise on the counter when the customer walks in."

No food is served at the shops, and crafts have become a large part of the inventory.

"Specialty sections (like the doll house department at Fogler's) give us something to offer that a Wal-Mart can't," said its owner.

And there are features from a bygone era that still survive at the Hoerrs' store.

"A lot of people say you can't buy candy for a penny anymore. That's not true here," said Mary Hoerr. "It's a big Saturday attraction."

The owners don't know how much longer the stores will be

operational, but no plans lie in the future to give up their piece of American heritage.

"We can't complain," said Hoerr. "It has provided us with a pretty good living throughout our life."

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Correction Notice

On page 4-1 of the 3/1 preprint, the heading "All Lifestyler on Sale" is incorrect. All Lifestyler is not on sale. Copy should have stated, "Lifestyler Exercise Equipment on Sale". The copy for the item #20712 treadmill, stating video track synchronizes climb of this treadmill with your VCR is incorrect. Video track synchronizes speed only on this treadmill with moving scenery on your TV through your VCR.

We regret any inconvenience this error may have caused our customers.

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